

# Brookline Preservation Commission Demolition Application Report

Address: 201 Summit Avenue

Petitioner: Lindsey Baden

Building type: partial demolition of house

National Register Listing (if Applicable): n/a



## Historical/Architectural Significance:

The house at 201 Summit Avenue was permitted to be built in 1949 as a “duplicate of 189 Summit Avenue - reversed.” Salvatore Onorato was the owner and builder of the three wood frame with brick veneer ranches at nos. 189, 195 and 201 Summit located close to the top of Corey Hill. Character-defining features of these ranches include low roofs, metal windows tucked up under simple boxed eaves and prominent attached garages close to the street. Together the houses represent early examples of the mid-century 20th century housing in-fill around Summit Avenue, Jordan Road and Lancaster Terrace.

By 1930 the land along Summit Avenue between the park at the top of the hill and the Sias Research Laboratory and Appendix Hospital, at the intersection with Lancaster Terrace, consisted of three lots owned by Sidney Beals and other trustees of his family. Brookline had purchased close to three acres of land just the east on both sides of Summit Avenue between 1900 and 1916, one third of it from the Beals family, “to be kept open for park purposes for a period of not less than 20 years” after the second acquisition.



201 Summit Ave  
June 2014

*201 Summit Ave*



In 1948, Raytheon Manufacturing Company applied for a permit for the erection of a television broadcasting station and an antenna tower at 189-195 Summit Avenue. The Zoning Board of Appeals denied the application, finding that the project would be an eye-sore and blinding lights would create an annoyance to the residents and that the tower would disfigure the skyline and obstruct the view.

A year later Mr. Onorato applied for a variance to build a single-family house across the street at 200 Summit Avenue and his application too was denied, in this case partly because of neighbors' objections that "placing buildings on small lots in their neighborhood would spoil their view." Also in these years he obtained separate permits to build the three ranch houses, first at 189, then at 201 and 195 Summit, with low exposure compared to the older two and two-and-one half story houses nearby on the hill.



*south view*



201 Summit Ave  
June 2014



*three ranch houses &  
streetscapes from southeast  
and east*

The designer of the houses was R. J. Williams of Wollaston and the estimated cost to construct them was \$12,000 to \$14,000 each, with concrete block foundations, asphalt pitch roofs and oil heat. Builder Salvatore Onorato lived in Brookline and Boston. His children attended Brookline High School in the 1940s.



Dr. R. Bloomenthal bought the house from Onorato and in 1950 added two vestibules at each of the back doors. Early residents at 195 and 189 Summit included Fred Ralston, Nicholas and K. Pappas and William and P.B. Kahn.

The house at 201 Summit Avenue meets the following criterion for an initial determination of significance:

- c. The building is associated with one or more significant historic persons or events, or with the broad architectural, cultural, political, economic, or social history of the Town or Commonwealth; and
- d. The building is historically or architecturally significant in terms of its period, style, method of construction, or its association with a significant architect or builder, either by itself or as part of a group.

The house retains its integrity in terms of its location setting, design, workmanship, materials, feeling and association as one of a group of three mid-20th century ranch houses set in a row close to the summit of Corey Hill.